

Invitation, 2018

Sarah Morris

Your Words Become Mine
November–December 2018
Location Eschenbachgasse
(ill. p. 728)

Sarah Morris shows seven paintings from the series *Sound Graph* and a sound installation based on the phonetic recording of a talk with German filmmaker and philosopher Alexander Kluge.

Interview (excerpt)

Hans Ulrich Obrist in conversation with Sarah Morris on the occasion of the exhibition *Odysseus Factor* at the UCCA in Beijing, 2018

Hans Ulrich Obrist: [T]he most recent film [Your Words Become Mine, 2018] brings us... to Herzog & de Meuron, and the Alexander Kluge story, which was initially meant to be Werner Herzog. Can you first tell us about the epiphany and then the genesis?

Sarah Morris: The epiphany is that he [Alexander Kluge] is like a sprite. He has this sort of sprite-like quality that is very intriguing and very magical.

*We're talking about this German public intellectual who's in the film. His name is Alexander Kluge: he's a lawyer, he's a poet, he's an artist, he's a filmmaker, he's a sprite, he's just a lovely character. I wrote a script that we cobbled together—Tala helped me—we made a script based off of a book that actually another assistant of mine had given me that I always loved, called *Finite and Infinite Games* by a guy named James [P.] Carse, which is about game theory and human behavior, which I'm obviously really interested in. So we wrote the script, cobbled it together, and I asked him to read it. He said, "Well I'm not an actor." That's the one thing he is not: an actor. And I said, "Well I don't want you to act anything. I want you to read this script to me, I'll be there." I'm telling him this in a New York taxi; I've never met him before except for when you introduced me.*

We get there and I say, "And of course you can go off-piste, you can talk back to the script, you can ask me questions."

*Basically it's in three categories: it's the script, it's the questions, and it's the dialogue. You can't tell the difference between the three. That's really interesting and I love that about that film, and also that experience of having a dialogue with somebody from the past. He was also Adorno's and Horkheimer's lawyer at the Frankfurt School, he did reparations for the Frankfurt School, he worked for Fritz Lang... This guy is sort of the *Forrest Gump* of Germany, and basically of the 20th century; he's just a fantastic character.*

So I thank you very much for introducing me to him because you always introduce me to a lot of people—sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't—but that one was really a direct...

Hans Ulrich Obrist: It clearly worked...

*Sarah Morris: Yes and also I had breakfast with you in New York and we were talking, and I was like, "I was in a dialogue with Werner Herzog" because I had to have a German voice because I was filming it in the new *Elbphilharmonie* in Hamburg, which was like an 800-million euro project by then.*

*It's a bit like a wasp's nest or a void; Hamburg doesn't really have a *Philharmonic* of note yet. It's like a future wish or an anticipated moment and I wanted to make a performance in that space, a fictional performance, or let's say not a performance, like a warning, a poem for the future, and that's why I ended up with Kluge as opposed to Herzog. Herzog would have been too calming...*

*Hans Ulrich Obrist: I wanted to bring it back to painting because...you mentioned *Society Is Abstract, Culture Is Concrete*, the amazing new work of...*

Sarah Morris: "Sound Graph"

Hans Ulrich Obrist: Yes, the richness of "Sound Graph," and there is also a big painting, which is another "Sound Graph," and these are connected to this Kluge moment.

Can you tell us about the invention of these new paintings? It's the first time I've seen them...

Sarah Morris: ..."Sound Graphs." Well I was thinking so much about this:

*I really do think art is actually a conversation, it is a dialogue, it's constantly moving; that's why we're in it. It is about images but it's also about a conversation, it's about speech ... actually a flow; it's not just you, it's not just me, it's somewhere in between. Kluge says this really beautifully in the *Finite and Infinite Games* film.*

I'm also aware that we're being recorded all the time. Literally right now, in this room, the speech memo, the voice recognition patterning, N.S.A., the Snowden thing, I just started to think about making industrial poems using speech, but using them as compositions for the paintings. So I started looking at different program software to use for my own speech and also for Kluge's speech.

Hans Ulrich Obrist: It's interesting also because it's very much aligned with your entire work, this idea of industrial poems, because you said from the very get-go—I think it was in our first conversation—you told me that you wanted to erase the hand.

We spoke a lot about this with our friend Philippe Parreno ... Of course he is interested in automation, he's interested in the automatic processes and this idea that you set up systems, which then evolve and indexes...

Can you maybe talk a little bit about that, because it seems to be part of the umbilical cord that binds together the entire practice?

Sarah Morris: It is and it's a difficult one to articulate, but I think it's basically all around us. This automated network of decision-makings, recordings, movements, patterns, whether it's voice recognition—

I mean look how many devices we have on the table—but this is the future, this is how aesthetics are actually being shaped and I just think that it is the most subjective thing.

I think if you divide art history into the subjective and the objective, I am more interested in this seeming objectivity, but of course, when I look at the work, obviously I don't feel like it's been done before, so it's obviously an expression, somehow, of me. But I definitely feel like this idea of setting up a system and letting it run, like a rhizome, like a structure that you begin, that reproduces itself, like you're not even in control anymore. I like this...the fun part of making art is actually the loss of control.

gelatin

Beyond Hard
January–March 2019
Location Eschenbachgasse
Publication
(ill. p. 730)

Text
Christian Meyer

Partition

Penetrations, interstices, and holes have always been important themes for the artist group *gelatin* (Wolfgang Gantner, Ali Janka, Florian Reither, Tobias Urban). In 2007, as part of a festival in Coney Island, New York, they spent day after day digging their way down into the sandy beach, only to backfill the resulting cavity at the end of every day. In 2013, *gelatin* continued this rigorous artistic exploration in the exhibition *Loch* at Belvedere's 21er Haus in Vienna. Within the glass exhibition hall stood an enormous Styrofoam cube measuring eight by eight by eight meters. *gelatin* and assistants spent five days working over the monumental material. They dug holes with homemade hot-wire loops, shovels, and hands. The resulting cavities were used as molds; various stands and pedestals were inserted into the still-wet plaster, and the resulting sculptures were pulled out like giant lollipops.

For the exhibition *Beyond Hard* at Galerie Meyer Kainer *gelatin* created a group of sculptural "portraits," carving negative back-of-the-head forms into two blocks of Styrofoam. After putting them together, they applied a casting process with plaster. The resulting bust derives its formal tension from the feel of the casting material, depicts a "mirrored," faceless double head, submerged in a surface that appears to



Untitled (detail), 2019
synthetic plaster, styrofoam
225×70×100 cm

be a random remnant of production. The dualistic nature of these sculptures reveals a schizoid disposition that begs an investigation of the figures' symptoms and urges that we view the emergence of forms as an ensemble of tension processes.

"In the recurrent symptom and in play, in the pathology of language and in the unconscious of forms, the afterlife is revealed as such,"¹ according to Georges Didi-Huberman whom we want to largely follow here. The mirrored half-heads' seeming immersion in a plane (water, a mirror, a dream?), as well as the disappearance of the faces within this plane, implies a moment of movement, with the organic configuration bringing highly divergent forces into play. The dividing plane thereby appears as an ever-moving interface between external inducement and internal drive. Beyond possible iconographic references, these sculptures do not represent the clear result of an action, but rather a context—that is, a dynamic interval, assembly work, between cause and effect, thus establishing a dialectical relationship between form and time. Moreover, the non-visibility of the faces shifts the articulation of the figures' character to the particular emphasis on the "hair." An animated surface, such as the undulating back of the head, is then conceived as a plastic symptom of this movement or of pathos. One should see the unconscious of forms, that is, the manner in which a transference onto a secondary feature is expressed, as a reemergence of the repressed. Attributes of imprinting, as fed by our collective memory, are also reflected in the features of the "hair," to which gelatin devote the entirety of their stagecraft.

The partially minimal deviations of the "mirrored" halves of the head—which have actually been formed independently—express paradoxes, everything oscillates around a formal axis of symmetry, a structuring force and visual hinge around which all of the contradictions and conflicts at work in the sculpture dance. For reasons of durability, the head was subsequently cast in aluminum, and pedestals epoxy coated. In such a way the indoor pieces were transformed into durable outdoor sculptures.

A succession of casts ultimately leads to the creation of a kind of large toy, which, similar to the project on the beach at Coney Island, allows mass and excavation to be put to work both dialectically and visually. Yet the cast, "in its 'negativity'—the hollow, the void that it creates and exposes—clouds any iconic recognition. The anthropomorphism of these works must accordingly be understood as the application of an indexical relation: even as a self-portrait, it makes no concessions to imitative likeness in the general sense."²

1 – Georges Didi-Huberman, *Das Nachleben der Bilder*, Berlin 2010, p. 63

2 – Georges Didi-Huberman, *Was wir sehen blickt uns an*, Munich 1999, p. 110–111

Ulrike Müller

Container Contained

Re-issue of the exhibition „Ulrike Müller: Container“ at Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf 2018/19

March–April 2019

Location Eschenbachgasse

(ill. p. 734)

Review (Exzerpt)

Nadja Abt, „Ulrike Müller: Container“, Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Texte zur Kunst, Nr. 113, März 2019

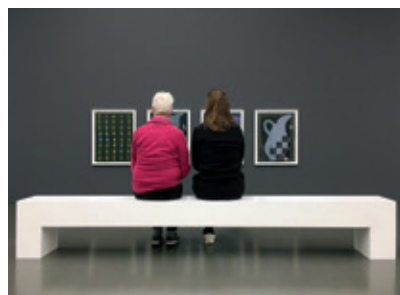
Aufgeladene Fracht

Die Erfindung einer genormten, stapelbaren Stahlbox revolutionierte 1956 den Welthandel und ist heutzutage Sinnbild der Globalisierung. Anfang Januar verlor die „MSC Zoe“ ca. 300 dieser Container während eines Sturms in der Nordsee. Seitdem werden Flachbildschirme und alle möglichen Waren an die verschiedensten Küsten

gespült. Die Treibgutansammlungen im Meer werden auch als „inaccurate drifters“¹ bezeichnet, was sich poetisch mit gegenkultureller Strömung übersetzen und mit Uneindeutigkeit bzw. einem Umherdriften assoziieren ließe. (...) In der dunkler gestrichenen Raumbälfte hängen verschiedene Gruppen von Müllers Monotypien. Bis auf eine einzige wurden alle präsentierten Arbeiten 2018 produziert. Das aus dem 17. Jahrhundert stammende Druckverfahren wird in dieser Werkgruppe kombiniert mit zwei weiteren Drucktechniken: dem Pochoir (wofür Schablonen benutzt werden) und dem Chine-collé (für die exakte Kolorierung bestimmter Bildbereiche). Die Kombination der drei Techniken bewirkt eine Vielzahl an Schichten, Farben, Figuren und damit eine bildnerische Tiefe, die bei Drucken eher weniger vermutet wird: Man erkennt Pinselstriche; mit Kreide gezogene Rasterlinien; Schablonen, die mal Blumen, mal Kannen, Malerpaletten oder Katzenfüße im Bild auftauchen lassen; Schachbrettmuster und viele weitere abstrakte Formen. Die ästhetische Nähe von Müllers Arbeiten zu Klassikern der Moderne zieht sich durch ihr Schaffen. (...) Farben und Formen wie etwa in Klees Malerei „Landschaft bei Pilamb“ von 1934 werden bei Müller aufgegriffen und in neue Kontexte verwoben. Jedoch wirken ihre Formen weniger zufällig, sondern sind vielmehr Resultat von Schablonen und Vorzeichnungen, basierend auf Details aus Archivrecherchen und Alltagsmotiven wie bereits Manuela Ammer in ihrem Text „Go, Figure.“ im Katalog „Always, Always, Others“ (2017) zu Müllers mumok-Ausstellung (2015/16) beschreibt.

*Durch diese gestische Sichtbarmachung des Schaffensprozesses eröffnen Müllers Arbeiten zudem einen Dialog zu Werken zeitgenössischer Künstler*innen wie beispielsweise Amy Sillman oder R. H. Quaytman. Ähnlich wie bei Sillmans Arbeiten, die zuvor im Camden Arts Centre in London zu sehen waren, werden hier Druckverfahren zwar als reproduzierbare Technik, aber auch als Offenlegung malerischer Mittel wie Pinsel- oder Kreidestriche verwendet. Durch das Prozesshafte implizieren Müllers Drucke immer auch einen Blick in das Atelier: Gedanklich entstehen Bilder davon, wie die verschiedenen Farbschichten aufgetragen, Layer ausprobiert und Schablonen ausgeschnitten werden. Kurzum: Müllers Arbeiten – und dies gilt natürlich auch für die Collagen, Teppiche und Emaill-Bilder machen Freude an einem künstlerischen Handwerk, das in der aktuellen Fülle an Videoinstallationen oder an industriell, unter fraglichen Bedingungen produzierten Skulpturen mitunter zu vermissen ist. Jedoch sorgen die scharf gesetzten Titel, die Müllers weiteres künstlerisches, kuratorisches sowie publizistisches Schaffen im queer-feministischen Kontext offenlegen, dafür, dass es sich hier nicht um einen herbeigerufenen Atelierromantizismus handelt. Plötzlich wird die eben noch vermeintlich im Bild erkannte Malerpalette zum „Kinderwunsch“ (2018) – und die verschoben-ovale Form mit Loch verwandelt sich zur Eizelle. Sprachspiele wie „Flutterby“ (2018) oder auch Titel wie „Nett“ (2018) verweisen nicht nur auf einen erweiterten Malereibegriff, sondern beweisen auch Humor.*

*Ein Aspekt, der ebenfalls ins Auge sticht, ist Müllers Verwendung von Farben. Alle Werke durchzieht ein Wechselspiel aus warmen Erd- und Violettönen mit tiefen Blautönen. In der Monotypie „Diavolaki“ (2018) wirkt die Palette aus Magentatönen über Cadmium-Orange gelb bis hin zu einem Ceruleanblau fast fluoreszierend intensiv. Die derart bunten Drucke lassen an tropische Farbpaletten eines Hélio Oiticica denken und an jüngere abstrakte Arbeiten und Teppiche des brasilianischen Kollektivs AVAF. Sie alle verbindet ein queer-politischer Diskurs um Farbe im Sinne von „Buntheit“, also Vielfalt als vereinendes optimistisches Moment in Zeiten politischer Repression – sei es die brasilianische Diktatur von damals, heute, oder, im Falle der in New York lebenden Ulrike Müller, ein amerikanischer Präsident. Dazu passend erinnern auch die vertikal gehängten Collagenreihen „Cut and Paste“ (2018) an die Poesiebewegungen Ende der 1960er Jahre in Brasilien, wie etwa an den Poema/ Processo-Künstler Falves Silva, der den farbigen Punkt als wesentliches Element der Semiotik ansah. Der farbige Punkt zieht sich auch durch Müllers Arbeiten – ihre Collagen bestehen zum Großteil aus ausgeschnittenen, sozusagen recycelten „Resten“ nicht gezeigter Monotypiepapiere, die zu minimalen Ensembles aufgeklebt werden. „Cut and Paste“ ist also durchaus konkret analog als auch poetologisch gemeint. Anders als bei den präzise benannten Drucken überlässt Müller hier der Betrachter*in eine freiere Interpretation jener „Visuellen Poesie“ (außer der vertikalen Aus- und Leserichtung). Die Künstlerin entwickelt so ihre eigene Semiotik aus immer wiederkehrenden Farben und Formen, die jeweils in Ausschnitten von einer Arbeit zur nächsten übernommen werden – was wiederum den prozesshaften Charakter der Arbeiten aufgreift und eine Art Gesamtleserichtung der Ausstellung vorschlägt. Am deutlichsten wird dies am Emaill-Bild „Step by Step“, das das Referenzmotiv liefert für die zwei großen, in Oaxaca*



Invitation, 2019

hergestellten Wandteppiche „Rug (con tacónes)“ (2018). (...) Die drei Werke zeigen jeweils ein Paar Absatzschuhe eine Stufe hinaufsteigend. Als Vorlage diente hierfür das Werbeschild eines Schuhmachers, das die Künstlerin entdeckt hatte. Was hier noch relativ konkret in der Umsetzung bleibt, zeigt Müllers einzigartige Weise, Recherchen zu Kunsthandwerk- und Alltagsobjekten oder auch zu queer-lesbischer Geschichte in vergrößerten abstrahierten Details wiederzugeben, um so neue Verbindungen, Zwischenräume und Lesarten zuzulassen.

Im helleren (...) Raum hängt in weitem Abstand zueinander die (...) Emaillé-Serie „Container“ (2018). Müllers Farb- und Formensprache wird hier auf jeweils 39,5×30,5 cm kleinen Stahlplatten in äußerster Präzision und Farbintensität durchexerziert. Durch eine vertikale mittlere Achse entstehen jeweils zwei Bildhälften, in denen ihr „Alphabet“ aus Punkten, Rundungen und Linien gerade so Platz findet. Hier ließen sich weiblich oder männlich konnotierte Formstereotypen ähnlich etwa zu Sadie Bennings Arbeiten aus Modulierharz – in die Bilder hineinlesen, werden aber durch die Abstraktion jäh gebrochen und lassen so den Raum für ein Dazwischen. So hebt beispielsweise ein tiefes Schwarz ein stechendes Orange hervor, ein gedecktes Graublau den primärgelben Halbkreis. Neben dem Verlangen, die dreidimensional glänzend geschmolzene Glaspulverschicht anfassen zu wollen, entsteht der Wunsch, dass Müllers Variationen niemals ein Ende finden werden.

Anmerkung

1 – Vgl. Alexander Klose, *Das Containerprinzip*, Hamburg 2009

Dan Graham

April–June 2019

Location Eschenbachgasse
(ill. p. 736)

Press Release

Dan Graham shows the life-sized pavilion *Little Perforated Cylinder inside Big Two-Way Mirror Cylinder* and four model sculptures plus the video projection *Don't Trust Anyone Over Thirty*.

Recently, designer Phoebe Philo worked with the artist Dan Graham to create the glass S-shaped pavilion for showing the Céline Spring/Summer 2017 collection. “I wanted to see it cast through the kaleidoscope of Dan’s installation. The fact that people can see themselves, and the clothes, makes for more complex reflections.”¹ Peter Eleey, who organized Graham’s Walker Art Center show in 2009, has noted a pretty consistent binary quality that runs through Dan Graham’s otherwise incredibly diverse body of work: “It’s in the low/high, inside/outside take on the ways in which Graham views culture and in the ways viewers see Graham’s work (and often in how the work itself is configured); in the artist’s ideas about both the production and the consumption of culture; and in the various combinations of transparency and reflection that form the crux of many of his projects.”²

Graham is one of those artists who wrote the history of contemporary art in the second half of the 20th century; his multifarious practice—encompassing theoretical writing, text pieces, performances, video works, installations, and architectural interventions—has shaped generations of artists. In 1966, Graham published in “Arts Magazine Homes for America,” a mock scientific analysis of the suburban habitat that initiated what would become a relentless tackling of the city plan and the politics of the gaze—topics that lie at the core of his world-famous pavilions.

Graham: “I thought it was about the white cube, so the idea was: what would happen if I cut away from that white wall and made a window? Then it would be architecture. I thought: why can’t artists do architectural models? There were two categories of

models. One category were almost fantasy situations, like *Alteration to a Suburban House* (1978), *Video Projection Outside of Home* (1978), or the *Clinic for a Suburban Site* (1980), which, in a way, were making the primary Venice Biennale piece *Public Space/Two Audiences* (1976) into almost architecture. The other group was new works that were both sculpture and pavilion. I was interested in the (Mies van der Rohe) *Barcelona Pavilion* (1929), but also I was interested in pavilions in city situations, in other words, telephone booths and bus shelters. What I liked about the pavilion was that it was somewhere between function and possibly architecture art. What I’m trying to do is deconstruct the corporate two-way mirror—which is the one-way mirror—into something more like a pleasure situation, a kind of heterotopia. As you walk around the piece, the sky changes, and your body changes and you can see the body changing, and other people’s bodies changing. So the time element, the durational element in relation to sky conditions is very important. In America, the ecology movement began with Jimmy Carter. Two-way mirror glass came in. Corporations wanted to cut down air-conditioning costs, so with two-way mirror glass, the side that reflects the sun means that the inside doesn’t have to be cooled by air conditioning. Also, it became the beginning of surveillance because in the inside you could look outside without being seen on the outside. And the outside skin, which was a mirror, reflected the sky so the corporation seemed to be identifying with the environment. And that was all because Jimmy Carter wanted to cut down oil consumption.”³

In 2004 TRANS (Sandra Antelo-Suarez) with co-producers Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Vienna, Foundation 2021 New York, Walker Art Center Minneapolis, and Voom/LAB New York, commissioned and produced a rock opera performed by puppets. *Don't Trust Anyone Over Thirty*, a 35-minute video, is on show in the mezzanine space of the gallery. Since collaboration was at the heart of *Don't Trust Anyone Over Thirty*, Dan Graham (concept) collaborated with Tony Oursler (visual conception) and Rodney Graham (recorded music) and participated in a discussion with several other artists who worked on the piece, including Phillip Huber (marionettes), who created its puppets, and members of the punk duo Japanther (live band).

1 – *Financial Times*, Oct 2, 2016

2 – *Walker Art Center Reader* by Julie Caniglia, Oct, 2009

3 – Interview by Coline Milliard, “I Don't Do Pavilions,” *Artinfo UK*, March, 2012

Heimo Zobernig

Two Sculptures

June–August 2019

Location Eschenbachgasse

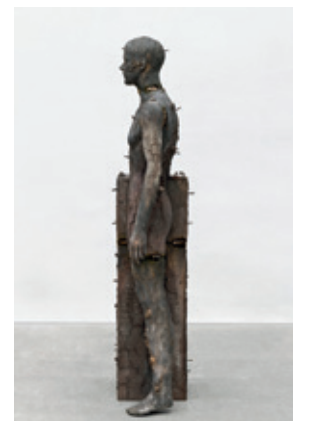
(ill. p. 740)

Interview

Michael Wuerges, *collectorsagenda.com*, May 2016

MW: Mit dem Österreichischen Pavillon in den Giardini in Venedig hatten Sie sich gedanklich ja bereits auseinandergesetzt, lange bevor bekannt wurde, dass Sie den Pavillon bespielen würden. Sie erwähnten in einem anderen Interview, dass es auch ein anderes Konzept hätte werden können.

HZ: Das stimmt, aber diese Überlegungen waren zum Zeitpunkt der Einladung längst wieder obsolet. Ich habe da quasi wieder ganz bei Null begonnen. Allerdings, zusätzlich zu den beiden großen schwarzen skulpturalen Einbauten, die den Boden und die Decke bilden, hätte noch eine weitere Skulptur im Raum stehen können. Es hat sich für mich die Gelegenheit geboten, eine schon länger geplante erste große Bronzeskulptur zu machen, in der quasi der Keim für die architektonischen Überlegungen steckt. Aber eben mit dem Vorbehalt, dass ich, sobald ich das Resultat sehe, entscheide, ob



Untitled, 2017
bronze
185×65×41 cm

ich sie zeigen will oder nicht. Es war für mich von vornherein klar, dass ich mir diese Möglichkeit bis zum Schluss offenhalten muss.

MW: Was hätte das für Sie geändert?

HZ: Es war dann klar, dass man gedacht hätte – wäre diese Bronzefigur zusätzlich im Pavillon platziert worden –, es ginge hier nur um diese Figur. Genau das wollte ich jedoch nicht. Yilmaz Dziewior, der Kurator des Österreichischen Pavillons, hat noch am längsten an der Idee mit der Bronzeskulptur festgehalten, aber dann stand sie im Kunsthaus Bregenz. Dort ist das Zusammenspiel in dieser Beziehung möglich, weil die Bronze und das schwarze Objekt voneinander entfernt stehen konnten. Die Figur blickt in Richtung des schwarzen Kubus, so dass sich eine ähnliche Situation wie im Mies van der Rohe Pavillon in Barcelona mit der Georg Kolbe Skulptur ergeben hat.

(...)

MW: Sie arbeiten oft mit einfachen, kostengünstigen Materialien – sei es Karton oder Sperrholz. Liegt dem eine gewisse Pragmatik zugrunde, oder dient die Auswahl des Materials nur als Mittel zum Zweck?

HZ: Das ist gar nicht so einfach zu beantworten. Wenn ursprünglich nicht auch eine Provokation darin gelegen hätte, eben gerade nicht die traditionellen Materialien der Bildhauerei zu verwenden, wäre ich das wahrscheinlich nicht so angegangen. Eine Zeit lang dachte ich mir, dass da vielleicht auch ein ökologischer Gedanke mitschwingt, den ich ja auch nach wie vor als Ethik des Handwerks sehr spannend finde. Man kann aber Kunst nicht nach diesen Aspekten ausrichten, so wie man auch nicht alles beantworten kann, woraus sich Fragen ergeben. Mittel zum Zweck ist das Material ja immer. Es ist das Medium dessen, was man umsetzen möchte. Ich habe früher sehr vieles modellhaft gebaut. Modellbaumaterialien haben ja einen eher flüchtigen Charakter. Dadurch kommt man aber schneller oder sofort zu einem Ergebnis. Vielleicht hat es auch mit Ungeduld zu tun, also schnell zu dem zu gelangen, was man haben möchte. Etwas sehr solide zu bauen und mit teurem Finish zu versehen, dauert natürlich – und muss auch finanziert sein.

MW: Sind Sie denn ungeduldig?

HZ: Naja, also ewig darauf zu warten, bis was fertig ist, das ist schon ... (lacht) ... mal so mal so. Geduld – die habe ich auch. Ich habe Skulpturen aus Klopapier-Rollen gemacht. Das dauert manchmal zwei, drei Jahre, bis die zum Ende kommen. Ich fange mit einer Rolle an und weiß überhaupt nicht, wohin das führen wird. Die eine Rolle lasse ich nach links abbiegen, die nächste nach rechts, das geht so von einem Stück zum nächsten. Hier gibt das Material den Prozess vor, denn der Leim, mit dem ich die Rollen verbinde, trocknet langsam. Das könnte man eventuell auch mit einer Klebepistole schneller machen. Das mag ich aber in diesem Fall nicht, das passt nicht zum Karton.

Boltenstern.Raum

Min Yoon

June–July 2019

Location Eschenbachgasse

invited by Julian Inić

(ill. p. 742)

Text

Christian Egger

“The cognitive utopia would be to use concepts to unseal the non-conceptual, without making it their equal.”¹

In his first solo presentation at the gallery Meyer Kainer, the South Korean artist Min Yoon uses and subverts the spatial structures of the room, which has been named after the Austrian architect Boltenstern and designated for exhibitions since 2007. Ironically, Yoon installs four images in sizes from 72×84 to 72×86 cm on the wall containing

window niches, which in turn depict rooms in hatching style. The frames are covered with crocheted woolen textures, a delicate anthropomorphic gesture with lasting surreal potential. One picture also contains a portrait study of a tool that already has been used by the artist several times and in different contexts—a pencil—and which also provides the motif for the invitation card of this exhibition. A wall in another picture indicates cracks and refers to damages to the fictitious building left in disrepair and the vulnerability of its architectural structure. Perched on not entirely unrolled leather straps on the floor are two sewn leather turtle sculptures, conjoined by a common load and facing in different directions. They also serve as metaphorical triggers in the calculated play of the imagination, which allow for several possible narratives and references of varying complexity. Concrete references to a main narrative are not pursued as Yoon evades distinctly assignable forms of address and, with regard to the structure of the exhibition, strives for finely tared and simultaneous movements of concealment and visualization.

1 – T.W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 10

Curated by Florian Pumhösl

September–October 2019

Location Eschenbachgasse

Artists: Ella Bergmann-Michel, Alan Charlton, Christian (Georges Herbiet), Anita Leisz, Henrik Olesen, Florian Pumhösl, Ad Reinhardt, Wacław Szpakowski (ill. p. 744)

Review

Kristian Vistrup Madsen, Springerin, January 2020

The layout of Galerie Meyer Kainer lends itself well to narrative, and Florian Pumhösl knows it. For his curated by_vienna exhibition, the artist has arranged the course of its three rooms like a musical score. First, by the entrance towards the street, the melody is established, and our curiosity triggered. Then, in the large central space, follows a sequence of verses divided by a chorus. Here, some drama plays out. The upstairs space is just large enough for some kind of resolve, no grand finale but the curl on the pig's tail. What appears to be a display of the most minimal abstraction is rendered almost figurative by the tight narrative structure of Pumhösl's assemblage. You have to listen quite carefully, but there's a lot going on.

The melody as established in the entrée is structured by three positions: two of Henrik Olesen's resin milk cartons, both Untitled (2019); a drawing by Ella Bergmann-Michel, Untitled (black light) (B173) (1923); and Pumhösl's own Formed Speech 2019 – Negative 5 (2019), a slim shape in black granite. The combination, frankly, is thrilling. In Olesen's cheeky milk cartons, we see a product without its declaration, a content liberated from the social construct of its surface. Meanwhile, with her geometric abstraction, Bergmann-Michel has turned technology inside out, so to speak, arranging wires and disks like a landscape, or the other way around; making a stringent grid of nature's wild intricacies. Pumhösl's negative shape posits a different theory of the non-indexical object. Rather than peeling away the surface—like Olesen or Bergmann-Michel, developing an image from what usually isn't seen—he shows us the Thing as absence, imprint, or trace. An inverted rhythm that divides as well as connects in the reveal-conceal dynamics between the trio.

The main room contains three verses, each framed by specimens of Pumhösl's "Formed Speech" series. One is the door to the gallery's office: negative space, not as formalized imprint, but in its natural habitat. Clever. In another, it's possible to detect a very understated conflict between two austere works by Ad Reinhardt and Alan Charlton, respectively. Reinhardt—who built on the foundation of someone like Bergmann-Michel—insisted on abstract art as pure, disinterested, and separate from daily life. But his Untitled (1952) is not as strict as they tend to come from his hand. In fact, in the company of Charlton's skinny, grey Line Painting (1979), far more brutal in its formal rigour, Reinhardt's composition on dark blue looks positively poetic. But it was Charlton



HENRIK OLESEN
Untitled, 2019
epoxy resin
23×7×7 cm

who chose to work in concrete grey precisely for its emotive resonance; what it tells of life in bleak industrial cities. In context, though, Charlton stares dire mundanity in the face and Reinhardt looks away, both paintings have the visual impact of a solemn intake of breath. Not so different at all.

In the third verse, Anita Leisz puts a theatrical end to the melancholic gentlemen's tiff with her Untitled (2016) sculpture. This fragment of a room, a box, or a coffin lined with ash-colored contouring is not shy of mystery. What happened? What other story did this prop fall out of? From here, we might look back at Reinhardt's stubborn purity and ask: why are you so afraid of the mess? Leisz, like Olesen, is the stray note that interrupts the rhythm just because it can.

For the outro upstairs, Plumhösl takes us back to Bergmann-Michel's 1920s. Here, a duet plays out between Wacław Szpakowski, mainly an architect who experimented privately throughout his life with continuous line drawings, and dadaist Christian (Georges Herbiet), whose diagrams purport a faux-(because Dada?)-scientific "global aesthetic." The works bridge the semantic fields of science-technology-nature and compulsion-abstraction-emotion that have run through the exhibition. Szpakowski clearly worked to understand something about the relationship of shapes to rhythm and continuity, and knew that he had to reach that understanding intuitively, practically. As such, there's a surprisingly tentative and questioning element to his otherwise inhumanly perfect patterns. And this, in the end, is also the essence of Pumhösl's black granite refrain: Abstract Minimalism is a question directed at the fundamentals of life; an attempt to untangle the technical nitty-gritty of space, signs, and even such soft attachments as memories and emotions. I much enjoyed the music.

Anne Speier

Der Spass an der Arbeit
November–December 2019
Location Eschenbachgasse
(ill. p. 748)

Review
Maximilian Geymüller, Spike Art Magazine, no. 62, 2020

Anne Speier's works are a hybrid mix of technical procedures and image sources that is usually difficult to penetrate: three-dimensional montages like the dinosaur legs shown at Silberkuppe in Berlin a few years ago, with giant tongues grafted onto them that licked the walls or ceilings clean; or the two-dimensional montages like the eight new large-format paintings on view here. In the spatially and thematically core work More Diligence, More Sisters (2019), silk-screened blue overalls and down coats have heads with gloomy faces stuck on them that stare out of the painting in various directions. This meticulously elaborated group of figures hovers in front of a backdrop that has been deliberately sloppily painted in a dirty yellowish green. Two wedges of red paint inserted behind the figures complete the scene. The sisters here, as the title suggests, were preceded by an earlier painting that Speier showed at the Secession in Vienna last year: Die Schwestern Fleiss (The Sisters Fleiss) (2019). Their faces have in the meantime been photographed, aged with FaceApp, and reproduced as a silk-screen and assembled to form a new painting. Such transfers and fusions also come up elsewhere in the exhibition: In The Red Trousers (2019) the two sisters were slightly physiognomically altered and stuck in romper suits, while a few pairs of silk-screened jeans were lined up behind them. And Judith's head in Judith at the Window (2019)—another FaceApp version of a painted variation on Lucas Cranach the Elder's female figure from Judith with the Head of Holofernes (c. 1530)—reappears (this time not aged) at several points on the bottom edge of Idols Hitting Rock Bottom (2019).

In the foreground of this show of references stands a coquetry and play with the question of meaning. Speier's "pleasure in the work" apparently derives above all from laying out narrative trails that lead nowhere. The prey is everywhere and nowhere. In the press release, co-written by the artist, the guessing games heat up: "Identity, decay, and repetition are aspects one might search out here." And it continues:

"Perhaps. Perhaps the screen-printed work clothes are meant to express a negotiation of identity and individuality; perhaps the subject is the industriousness we may associate with them—or the misperception we may be laboring under." With this loud teasing, one quickly forgets the mysterious old German painting again. Nevertheless: beyond the semantic hot-air of the press release, which has an eye on trendy discourses, the text itself does offer a compelling path through the subjects of the paintings, even if it is one that lies more in the background. The path, it turns out, is related to an architectonic element: More Diligence, More Sisters hangs on a partitioned wall in front of a window facade located right after a narrow corridor leading from the first room of the gallery to the second, so that upon entering the show you are forced to press closely to the painting from the side. There is thus a moment of confrontation between the work and the viewer that can be understood as a prelude to a grand narrative. It is the history of images that acquires a kind of autonomy, supposedly a Renaissance invention (the age of Cranach), which has since progressed so far that we have fallen entirely out of the context of how these works are created. Not only is the reproduction of images perfected by apparatuses today, but their aging is also adopted and controlled by AI-based algorithms. We are not needed, in other words. The paintings self-confidently turn inward, away from us, networking themselves and setting their own circulation in motion. The final connections are thus severed with a single blow—ciao, Holofernes.

Boltenstern.Raum

Hélène Fauquet
Interiors
November–December 2019
Location Eschenbachgasse
(ill. p. 750)

Press Release

The show presents a series of works first exhibited at the Kunstverein Nürnberg under the title *Interiors*, augmented with one unshown work.

For this work series, found images of stained glass panes have been edited and UV-printed onto untreated wood boards. The repeated motifs are isolated privacy windows, typically found in domestic housing. In their translucently printed form, the digital image reveals the permeable grain of the wood support upon which the glass composition is printed, thus visualizing the process of translation from one screen to another.

As an expression of taste, wealth, and status, the aesthetic of the stained glass window functions as a shield against the neighbor's intrusive gaze. One panel carries traces of a domain name like digital debris. A hand appears in the lower corner of another, producing a form of presence within the otherwise disorientingly flattened crystalline space. That figure is absorbed into the shimmering fragmentary surface to produce a non-communicative, partial, and anonymous reflection. The panels' spatial distribution and recurring central diagram generate a stuttering rhythm. The tightly cropped motif limits knowledge about what lies both beyond and in front of the windows, yet they remain markers of entangled states. Once reversed onto itself, the printed surface becomes the site of projections and false promises. As a means of setting individual boundaries, these privacy windows allude to a visual economy of observation and reciprocal social control. The decorative boards pre-structure a libidinal interface between seeing and (not) being seen, a life and its audience. Through the prism of voyeurism and exhibitionism, the unwarranted reflection potentially culminates in paranoia, agoraphobia, or the weariness of performing a self.



Halloween Edition, 2019
acrylic, oil, screen print and paper on canvas
90×100 cm